

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NICOSI 00290 311621Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 OES-07 AGRE-00 IGA-02 IO-14
SP-02 USIA-15 AID-05 EB-08 NSC-05 TRSE-00 SS-15
STR-07 OMB-01 CEA-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-02 PRS-01 COME-00 /125 W
-----102245 010227Z /41

R 311518Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7169
INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ROME

UNCLAS NICOSIA 0290

DEPT PASS USDA
TEL AVIV FOR AGATT
ROME FOR DR. COSTIGAN

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, CY
SUBJECT: MINISTER DOWNPLAYS BARLEY PROBLEM

REF: NICOSIA 3220

1. MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE KOLOTAS MADE LENGTHY SPEECH
JANUARY 30 REVIEWING ACTIVITIES OF HIS MINISTRY DURING
THE PAST YEAR AND LOOKING FORWARD TO 1978. HIGHLIGHT OF
MESSAGE WAS MINISTER'S CLAIM THAT INCREASE IN VALUE OF
CROP AND ANIMAL PRODUCTION IN 1977 WAS 28 PERCENT OVER
1971/72 ONLY REFLECTS INCREASED PRICES. PRODUCTION
ACCORDING TO KOLOTAS CAN NEVER REACH PRE-74 EVENTS
LEVELS OWING TO LOSS OF 40 PERCENT OF THE ISLAND TO THE
"OCCUPYING FORCES" (COPIES OF SPEECH SUMMARY IN
ENGLISH BEING POUCHED AGATT, EUR/SE AND AID/W.)
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2. DURING PRESS CONFERENCE FOLLOWING SPEECH, MINISTER WAS
ASKED WHETHER GOC WILL PROVIDE COMPENSATION TO FARMERS WHOSE
CATTLE, GOATS AND SHEEP DIED AFTER EATING IMPORTED BARLEY.
(ORIGIN OF BARLEY WAS NOT CITED). KOLOTAS REPLIED THAT
NUMBER OF DEATHS HAS BEEN EXAGGERATED BY PRESS REPORTS.
DEATHS FOLLOWING INTRODUCTION OF IMPORTED BARLEY HAVE BEEN

RELATIVELY ISOLATED AND THE SAME BARLEY HAS BEEN FED TO HERDS ADJACENT TO THOSE AFFECTED WITHOUT ANY ILL EFFECTS BEING NOTED. IT IS ALSO BEING FED TO ANIMALS AT THE GOC AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH STATION WITHOUT ANY ADVERSE RESULTS. FURTHER, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE TESTS SHOW BARLEY CONTAINS NO DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES. MINISTER ALSO NOTED SAMPLES HAVE BEEN SENT ABROAD AND HE IS WAITING RESULTS.

3. KOLOTAS SAID THAT EXPERTS IN HIS MINISTRY FEEL THE DEATHS WERE PROBABLY CAUSED BY SUDDEN CHANGE FROM LOCAL BARLEY TO MUCH STRONGER (I.E. HIGHER PROTEIN) IMPORTED BARLEY. EXAMINATION OF THE DEAD ANIMALS HAS NOT REVEALED PRESENCE OF ANY POISONS BUT ONLY STOMACH DISTURBANCES. HE ASSURED QUESTIONER THAT HIS MINISTRY IS KEEPING CLOSE WATCH OVER SITUATION AND THAT IF IT IS ESTABLISHED THAT NAY GOVERNMENT BUREAU IS IN SOME WAY RESPONSIBLE THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONSIDER COMPENSATION.
CRAWFORD

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